

# Author uses single struggles as inspiration

By JOSEPH KOZIOL JR.

TROY – As a young girl growing up, Jenny Hershberger dreamed, like many young girls, of marrying and raising a family.

That hope was reinforced by her Christian upbringing as she read over and over about young girls waiting to be married.

Life sometimes doesn't go according to plan, however, as Ms. Hershberger entered her 30s still unmarried and felt a part of her life was missing. At first, that longing manifested itself in anger. Eventually, she found peace that grew from her relationship with God.

Her journey to finding herself and comfort in being single is chronicled in a new book, "Single and Content, a Journey from Despair to Delight."

The book, published through Ambassador International, is available as an e-book and is expected to be in hard-bound copy by March or April, according to the Troy resident.

"It has been painfully difficult to watch the years of my life come and go with these longings not yet satisfied," Ms. Hershberger wrote. "But now God has drawn me away from that desperate valley of discontent."

The book is intended to encourage others discouraged by leading a life on their own. While she has not lost the desire to be married, she has learned that leading the single life can be just as rewarding.

"Although I want to be married, I don't have to be married," she said.

Hitting her 30s, she said, was especially difficult because she knows women have a limited time to bear children. It also was difficult to see friends marry and begin to raise families.

Initially, Ms. Hershberger said, her close relationship with God was strained as she could not understand why he was not allowing her to see her dreams fulfilled.

"I believed I was a good girl, so I should get what I deserved," she said.

She also knew, at the time, that anger directed at God was misguided. "I knew that I shouldn't be mad, because God always knows what's best."

Ms. Hershberger began seeking joy in the other gifts God has given her. It was a slow process, but she began finding

something every day in which to thank God.

Sometimes, she said, people have to be thankful for things they may not want. When her father died, she still thanked God for the time she got to spend with him.

"Belonging to God is so difficult at times," she said.

Others who wish to take the same approach need to remember that it's much like exercising – you can't do it once or occasionally if you want to see the benefits.

"Single, divorced, married or widowed, His plan for your life is for His glory," she said. "God holds the key to your contentment, and once I found that out, I was able to fully embrace my singlehood."

The book also touches on the difficulty of living in abstinence and her "hormone-induced mania."

She knows that sometimes it can be miserable to do what is right, but acknowledges that God knows what is right and that His timing always is perfect.

Ms. Hershberger isn't single because of a lack of suitors. She was engaged at one time, but the marriage never happened. She admits she may be too particular when it comes to finding the right man.

Even if marriage does come someday, she knows it will not necessarily bring her happiness. "God is the only one who can fill that desire," she said. "I'll still be happy with my life even if I don't (get married)."

Many of her married friends are not in ideal marriages, so she understands that the desire to be married may not bring the happiness she is expecting. "It's reminding me that the grass is not always greener on the other side," she said.

Ms. Hershberger has spent the last year writing the book as she began to understand the path that God has laid out for her and she has accepted.

Writing always has been a part of her life. She has kept a journal since she learned her ABCs. "It helps me think things through," she said.

A graduate of Marietta College, she has worked as a freelance photographer and a graphic designer.

For more information, visit [singleandcontent.com](http://singleandcontent.com).



Photo by Keli Boatwright

Author Jenny Hershberger of Troy Township has written a Christian book about the struggles and triumphs of being single.



## Preschool tradition

Mother Mary, portrayed by Lauren Corwin, feeds baby Jesus during Notre Dame Elementary Preschool's recent nativity play at the Munson school. Baby Jesus was Lauren's new baby brother, David. Watching, from left, are Gabriel Dolan, Lucas Dolan and Micah Tager. What do these three have in common? As infants, they all played baby Jesus during the nativity play when older siblings attended the preschool.

## Religion News

### Author to discuss faith

Terry Pluto, Plain Dealer sports-writer, will speak during the 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. services Sunday at Mayfield United Methodist Church, 7747 Mayfield Road, Chester Township.

Mr. Pluto will sign copies of his new faith book after each service. Breakfast will be served after each service.

The church's second annual book giveaway will follow each service. Books, CDs and DVDs will be free. Baskets will be available for donations to the Russia mission team.

### Elderlife group to meet

The Federated Church's Elderlife group will hold its monthly luncheon at 12:30 p.m. Jan. 24 at The Family Life Center, 16349 Chillicothe Road, Bainbridge.

Lunch, catered by Kater to You, will be meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, mixed vegetable medley, wedge salad and dessert. Cost for the lunch is \$10. Reservations must be received by Wednesday by calling the church at 440-247-6490. Payment can be made at the door with a reservation.

Following lunch, guests will be entertained by pianist Randy Fusco. Mr. Fusco is a professor of music at Hiram College, where he teaches piano, music theory, music history and chairs the music department.

Elderlife is a church-based program directed at senior citizens in Federated Church and the community. It provides programs for spiritual growth, service to others and education, which especially are relevant to the age group. For more information about Elderlife, call Dolly Herschel at 440-247-6490, ext. 160.

## Obituaries

### Regina L. (Westfall) Coughlin

Regina L. (Westfall) Coughlin, 73, of Chardon Township and a lifelong northeast Ohio resident, died Jan. 3 at Geauga Regional Hospital.

The daughter of the late John and Ione (Wantz) Westfall, she was born Oct. 4, 1939 in Cleveland. She was an assembler with various area companies, most recently Tri-Delta.

Mrs. Coughlin is survived by daughters Cheri (Michael) Baldrige of Chardon, Andrea (Lee) Dale of Ashtabula and Susan (Joseph) Yezzi of

Euclid, 13 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, sister Shirley (Lawrence) Rost of Mentor and brother Richard (Sharon) Westfall of Seymour, Tenn. She also was preceded in death by husband Joseph Coughlin, brother Ronald Westfall and granddaughter Courtney Borecky.

Funeral services were Jan. 7 at Burr Funeral Home in Chardon. Pastor Allen Wilson of Impact Church officiated. Burial was in Mentor Cemetery.

Donations may be made to the American Diabetes Foundation, American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312.